PROVINCIAL EVALUATION POLICIES

ALBERTA EDUCATION
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PROVINCIAL EVALUATION POLICIES

GOAL STATEMENT

Alberta Education and school jurisdictions are responsible for ensuring that the highest possible quality of education is provided for students in the province. This mandate encompasses the teaching, programs and facilities provided to students in Alberta's educational system, from Early Childhood Services through Grade 12.

In order to maintain and improve the quality of education throughout the province, the Government of Alberta has adopted the following goal:

> Alberta Education and school jurisdictions will use the results of evaluations to improve further the quality of education provided to students in Alberta.

BACKGROUND

Alberta Education and school jurisdictions have been discussing for some time the need to increase and improve local and provincial use of evaluation in the management of education. A series of draft statements about evaluation was submitted to school jurisdictions and the other members of the educational community for discussion.

While the development of the attached evaluation policies was underway, the government announced in January, 1984 that significant changes were being made to the overall approach to the management of education in Alberta through the Management and Finance Plan. In making these changes, it was indicated that the current educational system was fundamentally sound and that it has been effective in meeting Alberta's educational needs. However, the management of education must always adapt to changing times. For example, the rates of economic growth and population increase have slowed down, and these trends are expected to last for some time. As a result, some new management techniques have been developed while others, currently in use, have been reorganized and adjusted: some are being discontinued. Central to the changes are increased quality of education and improved efficiency and accountability for both the province and school jurisdictions. A simplified provincial funding structure is also integral to this direction as well as a greater emphasis on a partnership between the school jurisdictions and the province in the planning, delivery and evaluation of education programs.

Evaluation which is done on a regular basis is an important part of the management of education. The major components of the process at the local and provincial levels are summarized below:

- Development of specific educational plans for the coming year;
- Implementation of the plans;
- Monitoring and reporting on the process of implementation;
- Evaluation of the results; and
- Use of the information to improve the education programs provided.

To achieve the Government's goal, five statements of evaluation policies, guidelines and procedures have been developed and adopted affecting the following areas:

- Student Evaluation;
- Teacher Evaluation;
- Program Evaluation;
- School Evaluation;
- School System Evaluation.

These policies apply to school jurisdictions, private schools and privately operated Early Childhood Services centres. They will be complemented by the development and implementation of policies, guidelines and procedures at the school jurisdiction level.

The implementation of the five evaluation policies by school jurisdictions, in cooperation with the province, each having well defined areas of responsibility, will assist in ensuring that quality in our education system is maintained and enhanced when necessary.

STUDENT EVALUATION

POLICY

Student achievement in provincially-prescribed programs will be evaluated to assist in the establishment, maintenance and advancement of standards.

GUIDELINES

1. The primary responsibility for the continuing evaluation of student achievement lies with each school jurisdiction and its teachers.

2. Each school jurisdiction will develop and adopt written student evaluation policies, guidelines and procedures in keeping with the intent of provincial policies, guidelines and procedures. These policies, guidelines and procedures will be a matter of public record, upon request. Alberta Education will provide assistance in the development of such policies, guidelines and procedures.

3. Student evaluation policies, guidelines and procedures should give consideration to:

   (a) the role of the student and the teacher in evaluations;
   (b) the fairness of the student evaluations;
   (c) the student's right of appeal; and
   (d) the use of the results.

4. Alberta Education has responsibility for assisting in the establishment and maintenance of high standards of educational achievement at the provincial and local level. Therefore, Alberta Education will:

   (a) develop, and provide to school authorities, diagnostic testing instruments to assist in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of students in order that appropriate individual instruction may be provided.
   (b) administer the Achievement Testing Program to establish, maintain and advance standards and to monitor their achievement over time; and
   (c) administer Provincial Diploma Examinations based on an established provincial program of studies at the Grade 12 level;
   (d) certify the academic achievement of graduating students by awarding a General Diploma or an Advanced Diploma;

5. A student's final mark on courses in which there is a Diploma Examination will consist of a 50/50 weighting of a school-awarded mark and the diploma examination mark. The pass mark for all Grade 12 courses will be 50%.

6. A person who is 19 years or older and who is deficient in the credits needed for a High School Diploma may receive a High School Equivalency Diploma from Alberta Education in one of two ways:

   (a) through a combination of formal studies and experience; or
   (b) by passing the General Educational Development tests.

   NOTE: Specific details of the certification and testing programs are outlined on page 9.

TEACHER EVALUATION

POLICY

The performance of individual teachers and the quality of teaching practices across the province will be evaluated in order to assist in the provision of effective instruction to students and in the professional growth and development of teachers.

GUIDELINES

1. The primary responsibility for the evaluation of individual teacher performance and for the overall quality of teaching practice lies with each school jurisdiction.

2. Each school jurisdiction will develop and adopt written policies, guidelines and procedures in keeping with the intent of provincial policies, guidelines and procedures. These policies, guidelines and procedures will be a matter of public record, upon request. Alberta Education will assist school jurisdictions in the development of policies, guidelines and procedures.

3. Alberta Education will not hear any appeals from individual teachers who are dissatisfied with evaluation reports in school jurisdictions which have adequate teacher evaluation policies. Alberta Education may consider such appeals from teachers within school jurisdictions which have inadequate policies.

4. Alberta Education and school jurisdictions are responsible for ensuring that:

   (a) teacher evaluation policies and guidelines are implemented appropriately; and
   (b) high standards of teaching practice are achieved and maintained across the province.

5. Teacher evaluation policies should:

   (a) be applicable to all teachers;
   (b) be fair and consistent in application;
   (c) provide for due process and appeal mechanisms within the school jurisdiction;
   (d) permit consultation with teachers in the development of policy, guidelines and procedures; and
   (e) ensure that the evaluation report is made available to the teacher in question after its completion.

6. The results of evaluations will be utilized to:

   (a) assist the professional development of teachers;
   (b) develop improved measures of teacher performance; and
   (c) take appropriate action with respect to teachers whose performance is unacceptable.

7. Alberta Education will conduct teacher evaluations in private schools and privately operated Early Childhood Services centres.

8. Alberta Education will investigate specific incidents involving professional staff in the employ of school jurisdictions when it is deemed by the Minister to be necessary and in the best public interest to do so.

9. A teacher who desires to appeal any matter relating to the issuance, withholding or cancellation of a certificate, may appeal to a committee established by Alberta Education.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

POLICY

Programs from Early Childhood Services to Grade 12 in Alberta will be evaluated in order to determine if the objectives are appropriate and if they are being attained in an efficient and effective manner.

GUIDELINES

1. School jurisdictions have the primary responsibility for the evaluation of all programs being offered by the jurisdiction.

2. Alberta Education is responsible for conducting evaluations of provincial programs.

3. Each school jurisdiction will develop and adopt written evaluation policies, guidelines and procedures in keeping with the intent of provincial policies and guidelines. These policies, guidelines and procedures will be a matter of public record, upon request. Alberta Education will provide assistance in the development of such policies, guidelines and procedures.

4. In developing local program evaluation policies, school jurisdictions should consider involving teachers, administrators and other members of the community.

5. A school jurisdiction may request Alberta Education to conduct program evaluations, either in co-operation with the school jurisdiction or as an independent evaluator.

6. Program evaluations should focus on the following:

   (a) the suitability of objectives;
   (b) the efficiency of the delivery system to achieve the objectives; and
   (c) the results achieved.

7. Evaluations at both the provincial and local levels will be used to make decisions about programs such as:

   (a) the maintenance, modification or discontinuation of existing programs;
   (b) the need for the development and implementation of other programs; and
   (c) the ways in which existing or proposed objectives could be attained in a more efficient manner.

8. Priorities for evaluations should be established in order that the resources available for this management function are utilized most effectively.

9. Final reports on program evaluations will be public documents.

SCHOOL EVALUATION

POLICY

Individual schools will be evaluated to assist in the establishment and maintenance of appropriate management, instructional and program standards which contribute to a high level of student development and achievement.

GUIDELINES

1. School jurisdictions have the primary responsibility for the evaluation of individual schools within their jurisdictions.

2. Alberta Education will conduct periodic evaluations of schools. School jurisdictions may also request Alberta Education to conduct school evaluations. The terms of reference for these evaluations will be established jointly with the local jurisdiction involved. Final reports will be made public within 60 days after being tabled with school boards.

3. Evaluations of schools undertaken by Alberta Education may be conducted by teams which include personnel from other schools systems or educational institutions.

4. School jurisdictions will develop and adopt written policies, guidelines and procedures in keeping with the intent of provincial policies, guidelines and procedures. These policies, guidelines and procedures will be a matter of public record, upon request. Alberta Education will assist school jurisdictions in the development of policies, guidelines and procedures.

5. In developing local school evaluation policies, school jurisdictions should consider involving teachers, administrators and other members of the community.

6. School evaluations will focus generally on the following:

   (a) the suitability of objectives;
   (b) the efficiency of the school organization to achieve objectives; and
   (c) the results achieved.

7. School evaluations will be used to assist in making decisions with respect to:

   (a) intended programs of instruction;
   (b) efficient and effective delivery of programs;
   (c) organization and management; and
   (d) quality of instruction.

   Decisions on the above should focus on how changes will improve the level of student achievement and development in a particular school.

8. Alberta Education will conduct school evaluations when it is deemed by the Minister to be desirable and in the best public interest to do so. These reports will be released at the discretion of the Minister.

SCHOOL SYSTEM EVALUATION

POLICY

The school systems of Alberta will be evaluated to assist school authorities in the management and operation of their physical, human and economic resources for the optimal benefit of students within their jurisdictions.

GUIDELINES

1. School jurisdictions have the primary responsibility for the evaluation of school systems.

2. Alberta Education may conduct evaluations of school jurisdictions or of components of their operations upon the request of school jurisdictions. The terms of reference for such evaluations will be established jointly by Alberta Education and school jurisdictions. A final report of the school system evaluation will be made public within 60 days after being tabled with school boards.

3. School system evaluations undertaken by Alberta Education will be conducted by evaluation teams composed of Alberta Education personnel, school system personnel, invited school system personnel from other jurisdictions, and representatives from other education groups.

4. School jurisdictions will develop written policies, guidelines and procedures in keeping with the intent of provincial policies and guidelines. These policies, guidelines and procedures will be a matter of public record, upon request. Alberta Education will assist in the development of policies, guidelines and procedures.

5. School jurisdictions will conduct school system evaluations in order to assess:

   (a) the appropriateness of objectives;
   (b) the achievement of system objectives; and
   (c) the efficiency of the system in achieving objectives.

6. School system evaluations will be used to make decisions with respect to:

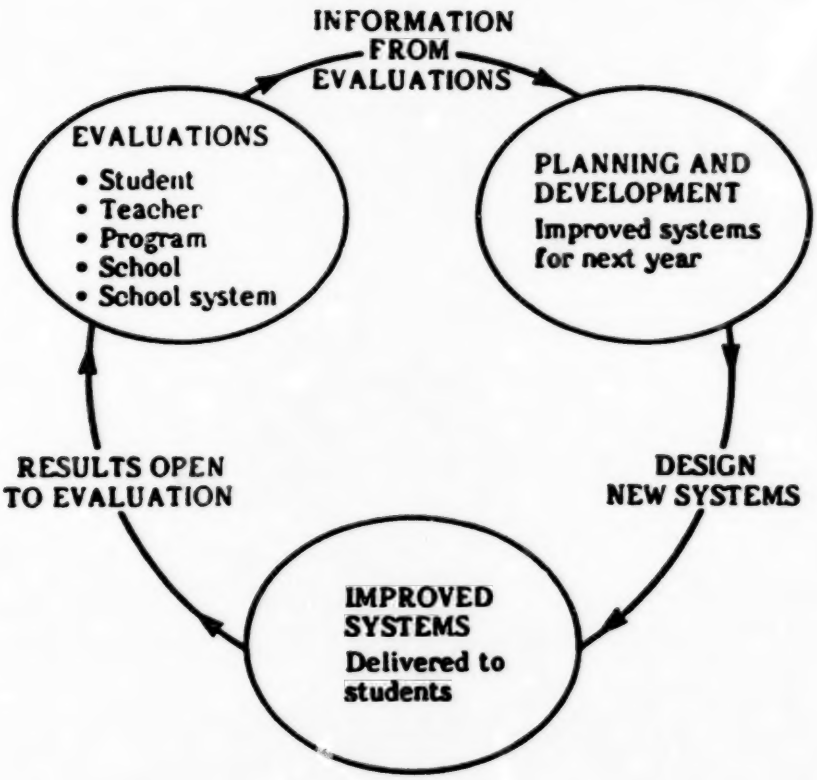
   (a) the maintenance, modification or discontinuation of present fiscal, management and program objectives of the system; and
   (b) ways in which the objectives of the fiscal, management and program components can be attained in a more efficient manner.

7. Priorities for evaluations should be established which focus on major issues, the resolutions of which are likely to contribute to specific improvements in the management and operation of the school system.

8. Alberta Education will conduct school system evaluations when it is deemed by the Minister to be desirable and in the best public interest to do so. The reports will be released at the discretion of the Minister.

SUMMARY

The following illustrates how evaluation results are used to assist in improving the quality of education delivered to students.



DEFINITIONS

LIST OF PROVINCIAL DIPLOMA EXAMINATIONS: Examinations will be administered in English 30, English 33, Social Studies 30, Mathematics 30, Biology 30, Chemistry 30 and Physics 30. With the exception of English 30 and English 33, examinations will be available in French to students who have taken their instruction in French.

GENERAL DIPLOMA: To receive a General Diploma, a student must satisfy course and credit requirements which include writing the diploma examination in either English 30 or English 33 and receiving at least the required minimum mark.

ADVANCED DIPLOMA: To qualify for the Advanced Diploma, a student must satisfy the current course and credit requirements and write diploma examinations in English 30, Social Studies 30, Mathematics 30, and one of Biology 30, Chemistry 30 or Physics 30, receiving at least the required minimum mark in each.

GENERAL EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT TESTS (GED): To receive a High School Equivalency Diploma, a student who satisfies the eligibility criteria must receive at least a minimum standard score on each of five examinations: writing skills, social studies, natural sciences, reading skills, and mathematics.

DIAGNOSTIC TESTING: The purpose of this program is to collect instructionally relevant information about a student or a group of students with the intent of using the data to aid in the improvement of student learning.

ACHIEVEMENT TESTING: The purpose of this program is to provide educators, trustees, and others with information about student knowledge, understanding and skill acquired in selected subjects at Grades 3, 6 and 9.

DEFINITIONS

POLICY: A policy is a philosophically based statement of intent. It is a generalized statement which is goal-oriented, establishing the direction for future discretionary action.

GUIDELINE: A guideline further defines the framework within which the organization can discharge the policy with positive direction. It tells what is wanted. It may also indicate why and how much.

PROCEDURE: A procedure is a statement of who does what, how, and in what sequence. Procedures may be either mandatory or discretionary.